UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
www.music.ualberta.ca

Vocal Arts Week presents:

A Country House Weekend

Sunday, March 4, 2012 at 2 pm
Convocation Hall, Old Arts Building

A Country House Weekend

An English idyll in four days & a prologue

CATHERINE ABELE soprano **ELIZABETH TURNBULL** mezzo

MARK WILKINSON baritone

STEPHEN RALLS and **BRUCE UBUKATA** piano

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Characters in order of speaking

Denis Stone	Bruce Ubukata
Priscilla (the hostess)	Elizabeth Turnbull
Mr Scogan	Stephen Ralls
Mary Bracegirdle	Catherine Abele
Anne, Henry Wimbush's niece	Elizabeth Turnbull
Ivor Lombard	Mark Wilkinson
Lord Emsworth	Stephen Ralls
The Hon. Freddie Threepwood	Mark Wilkinson
Henry Wimbush	Bruce Ubukata
Narrators	Bruce Ubukata, Stephen Ralls

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PROLOGUE

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FRIDAY AFTERNOON and EVENING - arrival

Fanfare, from *Façade* (piano-duet) — William Walton (1902-1983), arr. Constant Lambert (1905-1951)

The Journey *(Ernest Blake)* (baritone) — John Ireland (1879-1962)

As a composer, Ireland was a perfectionist, never allowing anything to be published until he was completely happy with it. His output was not large and he tended to write in the more intimate forms of piano music and songs.

Gavotte *(Sir Henry Newbolt)* (mezzo) — Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

Howells became known chiefly as a composer for church and choral society; but his early chamber music and songs include some of his finest creations.

Love's Philosophy *(P. B. Shelley)* (soprano) — Frederick Delius (1862-1934)

Delius's songs reveal his early study in Germany and his friendship with Grieg. Elgar once said that he thought Delius's music "not quite proper".

An Aside *(anon., early 16th century)* (baritone) — Ireland

Sleep *(John Fletcher)* (soprano) — Ivor Gurney (1890-1937)

Harrowing experiences as a soldier in the 1914-18 war exacerbated tendencies towards insanity, and Gurney died in an asylum. He had shown great early promise and his songs are regarded as among the finest in the English repertoire.

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SATURDAY

Nine of the clock *(John Doyle)* (soprano) — Gurney

It was a lover and his lass *(William Shakespeare)* (mezzo) — Gerald Finzi (1901-56)

Finzi was an early champion of Gurney's music; but his cycle of five Shakespeare songs, *Let Us Garlands Bring*, was published as a birthday tribute to Ralph Vaughan Williams.

The Trellis *(Aldous Huxley)* (baritone) — Ireland

Tordion, from *Capriol Suite* (piano-duet) — Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

'Peter Warlock' was the sinister pseudonym adopted by the composer, writer and musicologist, Philip Heseltine. It gives a hint of the complex temperament which caused him to alternate between periods of extreme productivity and spells of acute depression - it is fairly certain that he took his own life.

The Contented Lover *(James Mabbe)* (soprano) Warlock

Sleep *(John Fletcher)* (mezzo) Warlock

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SUNDAY MORNING and AFTERNOON

A Thanksgiving *(Bassus)* (baritone) Ireland

Earth's Call (A Sylvan Rhapsody) *(Harold Munro)* (mezzo) Ireland

The large scale of this rhapsody is unique in the corpus of Ireland's song. The poet was displeased when he heard it: "I wrote a poem, but you have turned it into an opera!"

Old Sir Faulk (Fox-trot), from *Façade* Walton, arr. Lambert
(Edith Sitwell) (soprano)

The first performance of *Façade*, in 1923, caused a minor scandal in London's artistic life. "Surely it is time this sort of thing were stopped," a critic wrote. Edith Sitwell declaimed her poems through a megaphone to the accompaniment of a chamber ensemble, the whole taking place behind a curtain. She and her brothers, Osbert and Sacheverell, had befriended Walton and they did not take kindly to Noël Coward's skit the same year, *The Swiss Family Whittlebot*, in which Maisie Gay as the poetess, Hernia Whittlebot, recited her verses with her brothers, Gobo and Sago.

INTERMISSION

SUNDAY EVENING

Polka, from *Façade* (piano-duet) Walton, arr. Lambert

Tell me the truth about love *(W. H. Auden)* Benjamin Britten
(baritone) (1913-1976)

Britten, a pupil at various times of both Ireland and Bridge, made a number of settings of Auden's verse in the 1930s; in this period, he was providing incidental music for plays and films and was part of the artistic circle centred around Auden and Christopher Isherwood.

Two Cod-pieces (piano-duet) Warlock
Beethoven's Binge (The Bard Unbuttoned)
The Old Codger

These are among Warlock's earliest compositions. The source of the first piece is clear enough. The composer described the second piece as being "the extracted square root of a recently discovered symphony in D minor by Julius Caesar" - i.e., César Franck.

So perverse *(Robert Bridges)* (baritone) Frank Bridge (1879-1941)

With far more sympathy for European composers, such as Berg, than was customary in England between the wars, Bridge displayed strong individuality in his work. His early songs, however, like those we perform here, are firmly rooted in the Romantic idiom.

Nocturne *(Auden)* (soprano) Britten

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MONDAY MORNING - departure

The Sweet Season *(Richard Edwardes)* (baritone) Ireland

Love went a-riding *(Mary Coleridge)* (mezzo) Bridge

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The readings are taken from *Crome Yellow* by Aldous Huxley, with a couple of extracts from *The Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James and P. G. Wodehouse's *Blandings Castle*. (No prizes will be awarded for indentifying these correctly!) Huxley's novel, published in 1921, is closely based on his experiences as a guest of Lady Ottoline Morrell at Garsington Manor, Oxfordshire; contemporary readers could identify pen-portraits of Prime Minister Asquith, the painter Mark Gertler, Carrington (as Mary Bracegirdle), Bertrand Russell (as Mr Scogan) and Lady Ottoline herself (as Priscilla). Huxley presumably put something of himself into Denis Stone, the character from whose viewpoint the story is told. Lady Ottoline refused to speak to Huxley for several years: "I was filled with dismay. I felt, somehow, that having given Aldous opportunities of meeting these people, I was responsible for these cruel caricatures, and that not only had he behaved dishonourably, but that he had involved me in his dishonour - and it might be thought I had acquiesced in his mocking."

The song, *Thank you so much, Mrs Lowsborough-Goodby*, was written by Cole Porter in 1934 and recorded by Elsie Carlisle, with Ambrose and his orchestra.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

The University of Alberta and Grant MacEwan Jazz Bands present:
The 15th annual Salute to the Bands
A tribute to the great swing bands of the 30s and 40s
Monday, March 5, 2012 at 8 pm in Convocation Hall
Admission by Donation

Music at Convocation Hall presents:
German Baroque Chorale Partitas
Marnie Giesbrecht, organ
Friday, March 9, 2012 at 8 pm in Convocation Hall
Featuring works by Bohm, Walther, Bach & Krapf
$60 Season Flex Pass | $20 Adults | $15 Seniors | $10 Students
Tickets available at the door on the evening of the performance only

Contempo New Music Ensemble
Adriy Talpash, conductor
Monday, March 19, 2012 at 7 pm in Convocation Hall
Admission by Donation

Music at Convocation Hall presents:
Connected: Celebrating Three Pivotal Composers
Jacques C. Despres, piano
Friday, March 23, 2012 at 8 pm in Convocation Hall
Featuring works by three pivotal composers: Beethoven, Liszt & Debussy
$60 Season Flex Pass | $20 Adults | $15 Seniors | $10 Students
Tickets available at the door on the evening of the performance only

Music at Winspear presents:
University of Alberta Opera Performance: Orphee aux Enfers
Featuring the University of Alberta Opera Performance
Sunday, March 25, 2012 at 3 pm at the Winspear Centre for the Arts
$60 Season Flex Pass | $20 Adults | $15 Seniors | $10 Students
Tickets available in advance through the Department of Music (3-82 Fine Arts Building, University of Alberta | 780.492.0601 | music@ualberta.ca) or at the door on the day of the performance

World Music Week presents:
The West African Music Ensemble
Thursday, March 29, 2012 at 7 pm in Convocation Hall
Admission by Donation

The Indian Music Ensemble
Friday, March 30, 2012 at 7 pm in Convocation Hall
Admission by Donation

The Middle Eastern and North African Ensemble
Saturday, March 31, 2012 at 7 pm in Convocation Hall
Admission by Donation

Thank you for supporting the Department of Music. Word of mouth is our strongest form of publicity. If you enjoyed tonight's performance, please share your experience with others!